

Evaluating Colors and Concepts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of different extremes of the color wheel can change the intended concept of a work of art. Specifically, what happens to the significance of the message of the piece if it is only colored using warm colors versus cool colors? How does the emotion created by the piece change when the color schemes change?

Previous research has shown a connection exists between meanings and colors. Colors can often be used for symbolism and can be used to evoke psychological feelings within the viewer. For example, red often creates a sense of passion, energy, and intensity, whereas blue is often associated with calmness, security, and trust.

This study is an art project exploring the significance color plays in concept in pastel drawings using warm colors, cool colors, and a color neutral line drawing.

Introduction

There are many different connections between color and psychological emotions. Different colors that are used can make us feel a certain emotion or may symbolize something that we associate with that color based on the cultural context behind that color (“Color Meanings & Symbolism” 1). For example, white causes a psychological response of purity and cleanliness while blue represents trust and security. Red creates a sense of power, energy, and passion, while yellow can be used to inspire optimism and hope (“Psychological Effects of Color” 1).

Purpose

The significance of this project is to further advance the knowledge of color theory and how it can change the message conveyed by a work of art. While there is research explaining the meaning and psychological connection between emotion and color, there is no art project dealing with warm, neutral, and cool color comparisons in pastel drawings and the viewer's response to these changes in color. This will be a study to obtain many points of view on how colors used can effectively change a work of art or affect its perceived meaning.

Hypothesis

Using the previous research done with colors and corresponding emotions, we can hypothesize that the concept of a work of art would change depending on the color because of the psychological effects connected to those colors being utilized.

Methods

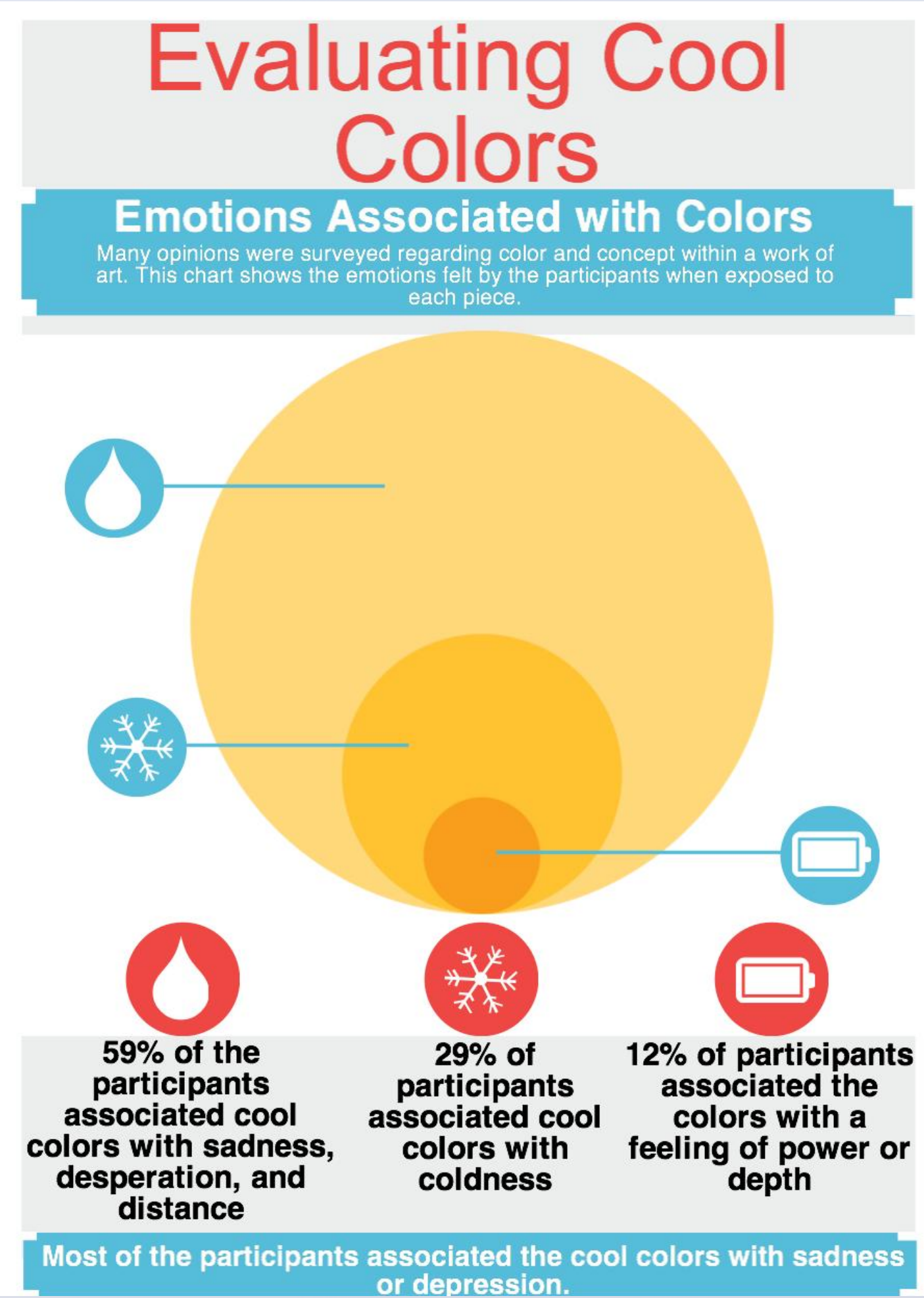
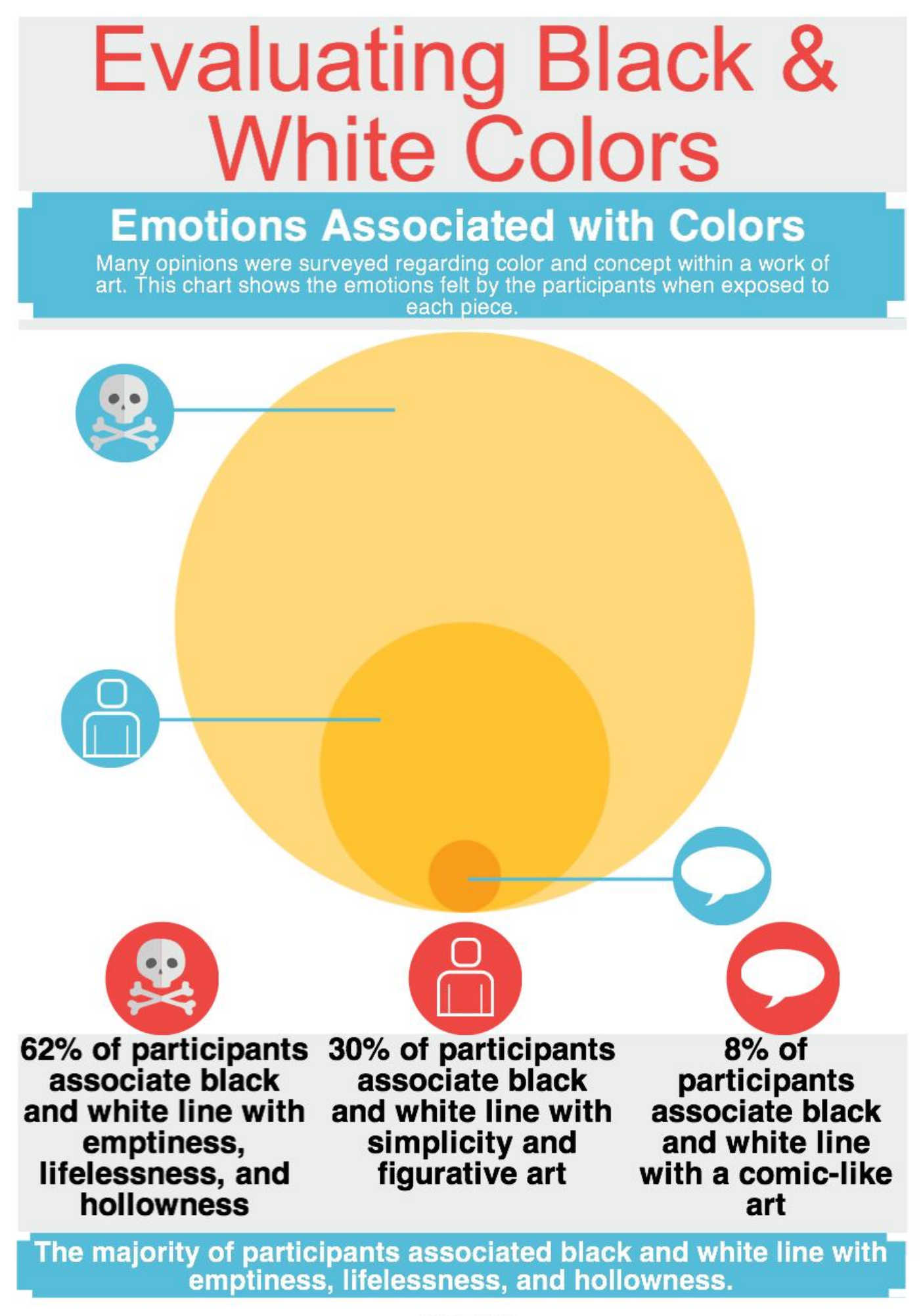
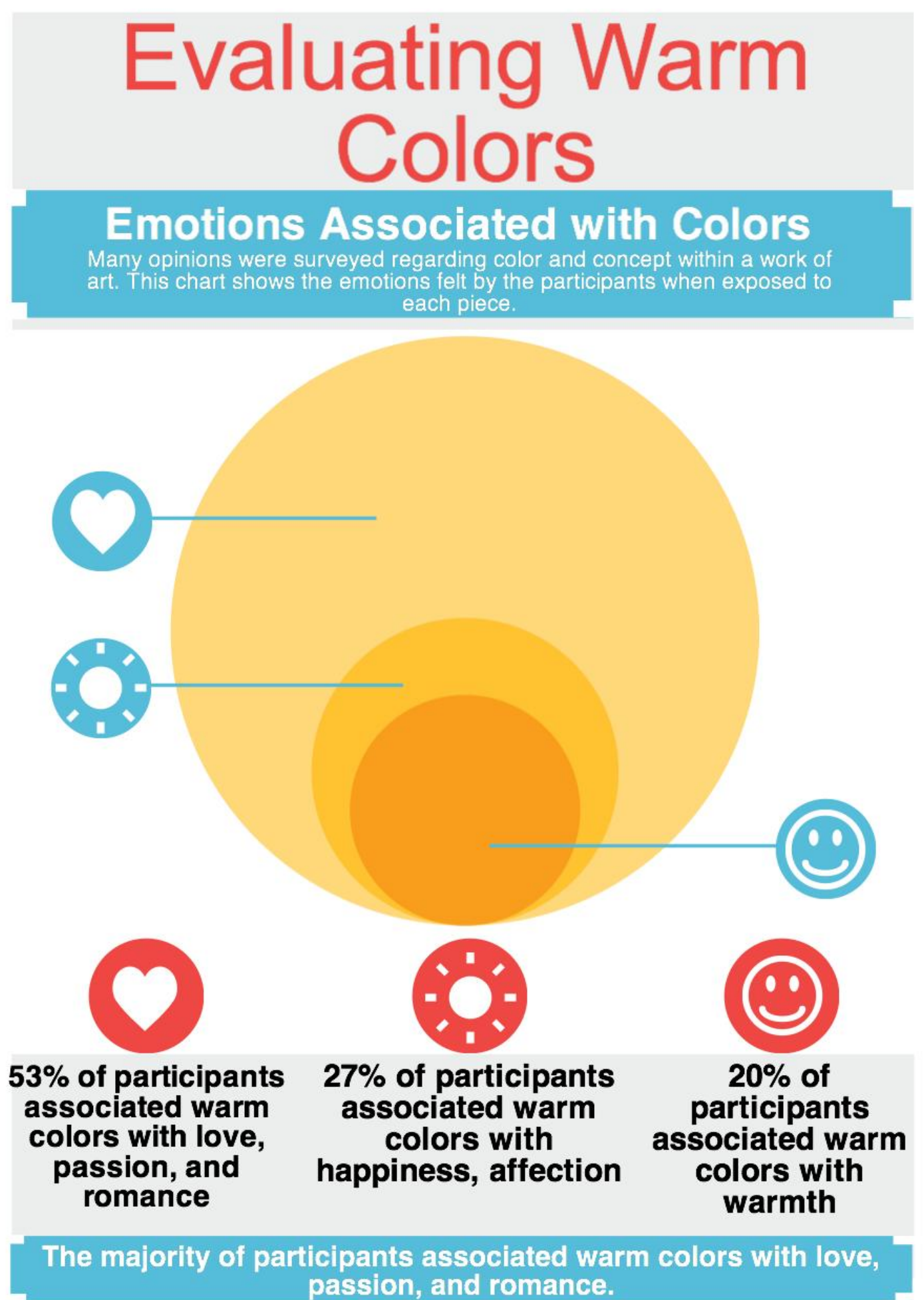
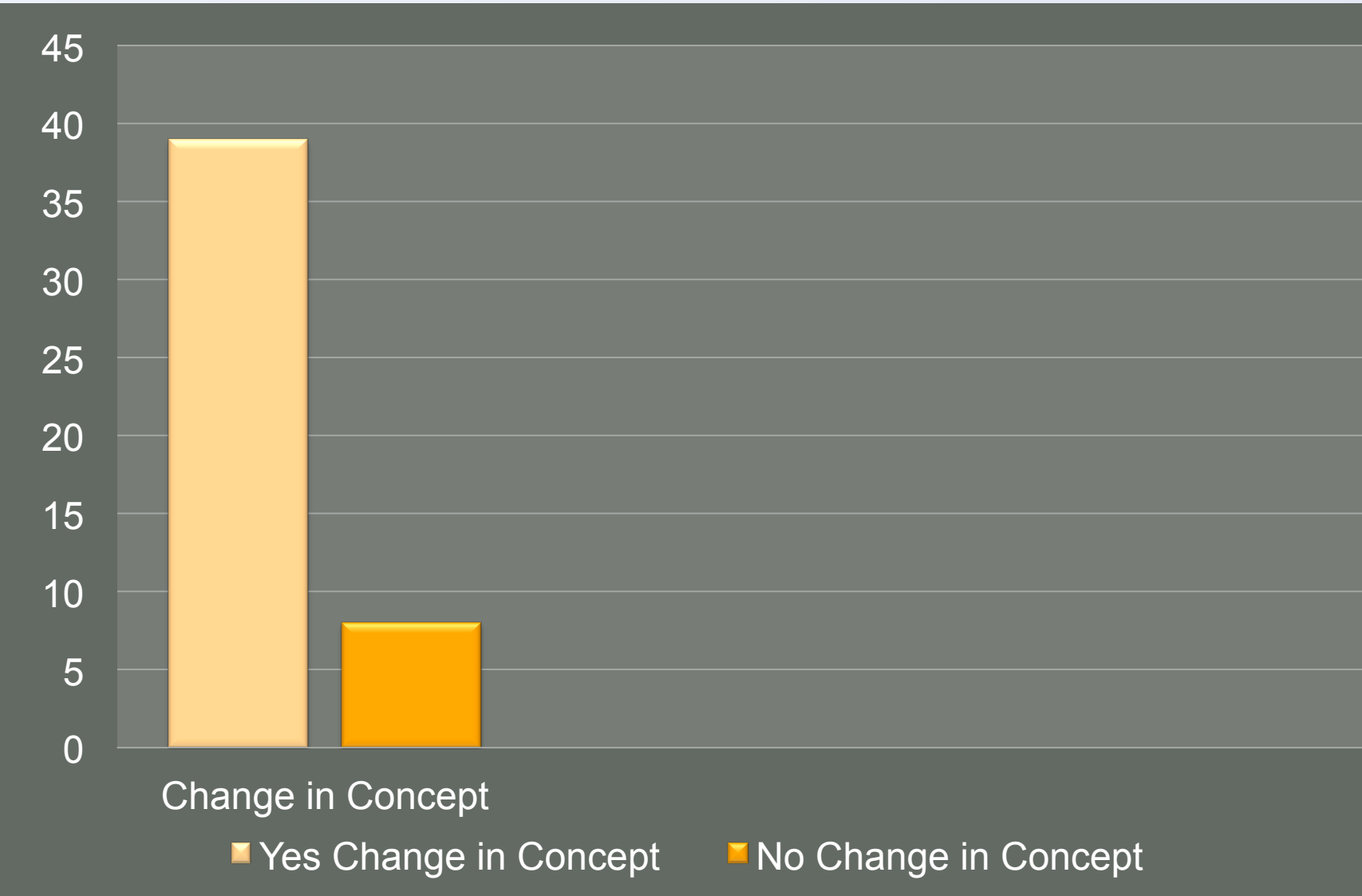
After creating three works, all with the same image but utilizing two different color schemes with one black and white neutral line drawing as a controlled variable, undergraduate art majors in the School of Art at Northern Illinois University were asked to participate in this study by completing a short survey.

The survey was submitted to randomly chosen classes.

Once the classes had been chosen randomly, I met with the instructors to explain the research project as well as get their permission to distribute the surveys to their class.

Results

The surveys collected from this study show that the majority of the participants believe that the message of the piece changes with the colors used, although some feel as though the message is not affected by the color change.

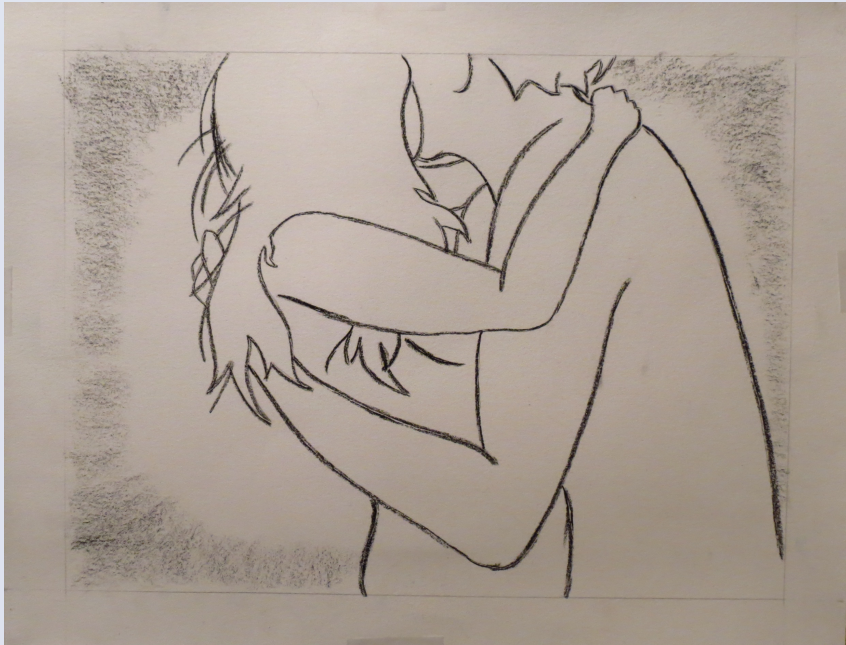


A majority of the participants chose “Embrace” with warm colors as their favorite, mostly because participants believe it is more inviting because of the warm colors.

A small minority chose “Embrace” with cool colors as their favorite; one participant said it held the most emotion for them.



“Embrace” Chalk pastels. March 2015. Warm colors.



“Embrace” Chalk pastels. March 2015. Black and white neutral line drawing.



“Embrace” Chalk pastels. March 2015. Cool colors.

Conclusions

1. The majority of the participants associated warm colors with love, passion, and romance.
2. The majority of the participants associated cool colors with sadness or depression.
3. The majority of the participants associated black and white line with emptiness, lifelessness, and hollowness.
4. Even though these three drawings were drawn exactly the same, the colors used influences how the viewer perceives the concept or story behind the imagery.

References

“Color Meanings & Symbolism.” Art Therapy. 2007-2014. Web. 20 October 2014.

“Psychological Effects of Color.” California State University Stanislaus. 18 April 2010. Web. 27 October 2014.

Acknowledgments

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